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DOCTOR STRANGE®

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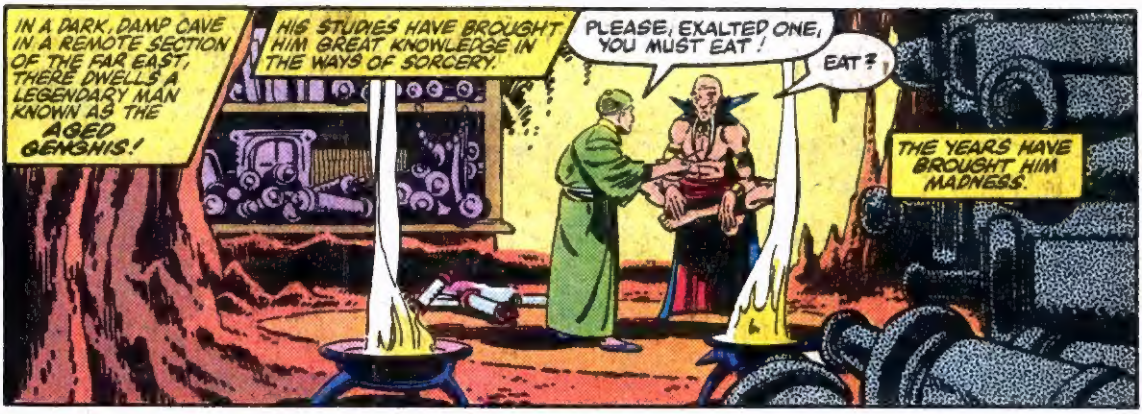

IN A DARK, DAMP CAVE IN A REMOTE SECTION OF THE FAR EAST, THERE DWELLS A LEGENDARY MAN KNOWN AS THE AGED GENGHIS!
HIS STUDIES HAVE BROUGHT HIM GREAT KNOWLEDGE IN THE WAYS OF SORCERY.
PLEASE, EXALTED ONE, YOU MUST EAT!
EAT?
THE YEARS HAVE BROUGHT HIM MADNESS.

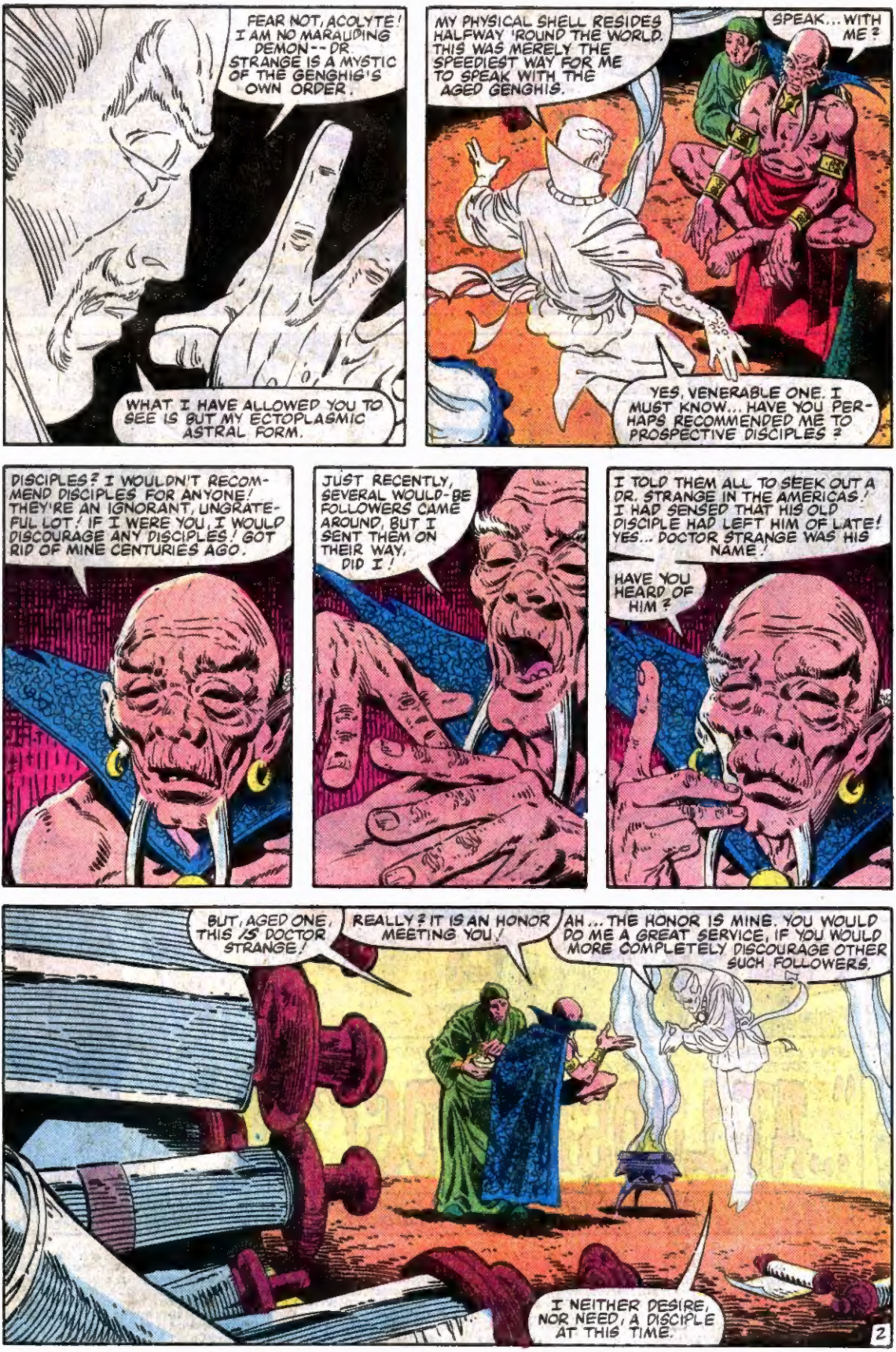
WERE IT NOT FOR THE ACOLYTES OF A NEARBY TEMPLE, HE WOULD NO DOUBT STARVE. HE LONG AGO FORGOT HOW TO FEED HIMSELF.
SAVE FOR THE ACOLYTES, HE LIVES THE LIFE OF A HERMIT... VISITED ONLY BY THE OCCASIONAL PILGRIM AND A FEW SELECT ERRANT SPIRITS.
PEACE BE WITH THEE, AGED GENGHIS! DOCTOR STRANGE BIDS THEE GREETING!

STAN LEE PRESENTS ANOTHER JOURNEY INTO THE WEIRD WORLDS OF DOCTOR STRANGE, MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!

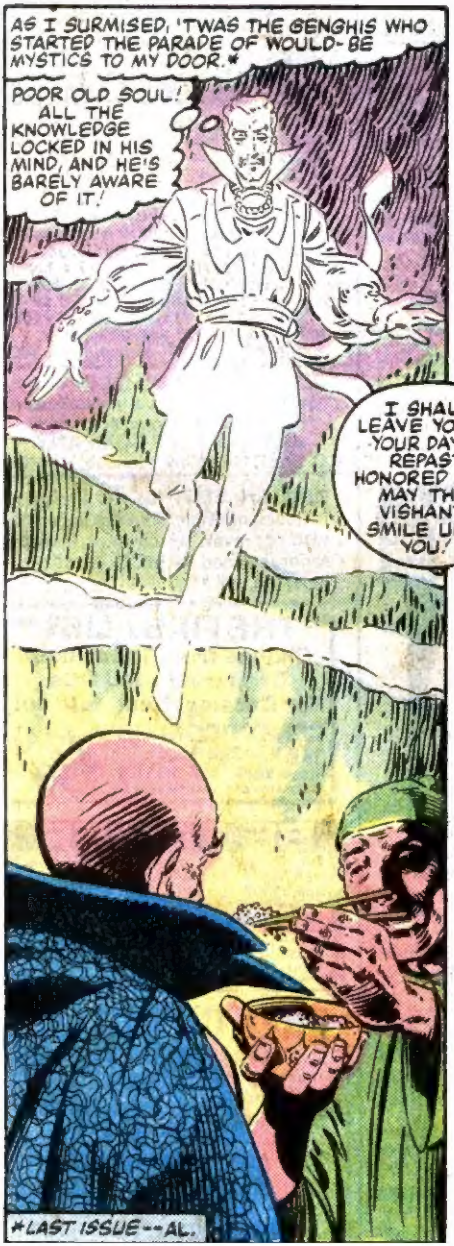
"...AT LOOSE ENDS!"

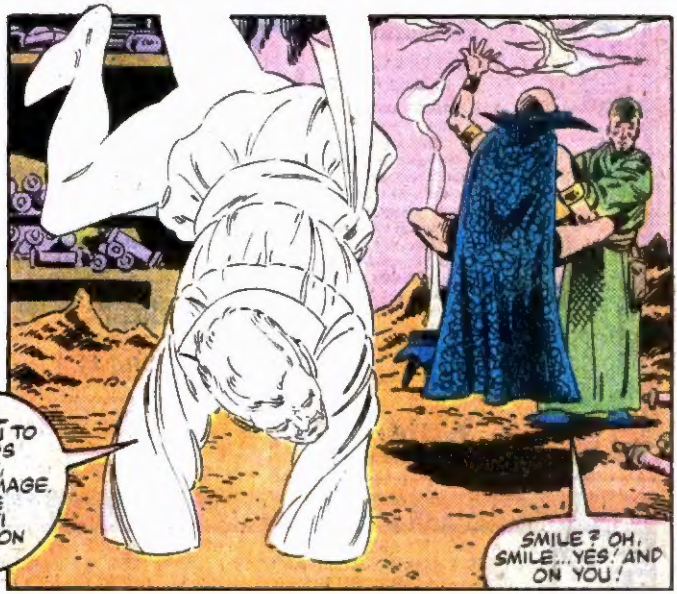
ROGER STERN ·WRITER· / DAN GREEN ·PENCILER· / TERRY AUSTIN ·INKER· / JIM NOVAK ·LETTERER· / BOB SHAREN ·COLORIST· / ALLEN MILGROM ·EDITOR· / JIM SHOOTER ·HOARY HOST·

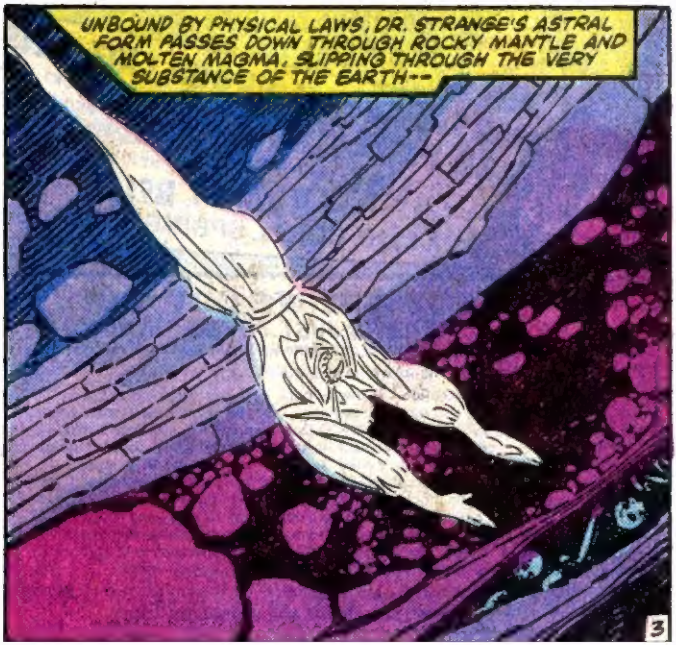
DOCTOR STRANGE™ **Vol. 1, No. 58, April, 1983.** (U.S.P.S. 426-910) Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President, Stan Lee, Publisher, Michael Hobson, Vice-President, Publishing, Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Published bi-monthly. Copyright© 1983 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 60¢ per copy in the U.S. and 75¢ in Canada. Subscription rate $7.20 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, $9.20. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. DOCTOR STRANGE (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of the MARVEL COMICS GROUP. Postmaster: Send address changes to Subscription Dept., Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016


FEAR NOT, ACOLYTE! I AM NO MARAUDING DEMON -- DR. STRANGE IS A MYSTIC OF THE GENGHIS'S OWN ORDER.
WHAT I HAVE ALLOWED YOU TO SEE IS BUT MY ECTOPLASMIC ASTRAL FORM.
MY PHYSICAL SHELL RESIDES HALFWAY 'ROUND THE WORLD. THIS WAS MERELY THE SPEEDIEST WAY FOR ME TO SPEAK WITH THE AGED GENGHIS.
SPEAK... WITH ME?
YES, VENERABLE ONE. I MUST KNOW... HAVE YOU PERHAPS RECOMMENDED ME TO PROSPECTIVE DISCIPLES?
DISCIPLES? I WOULDN'T RECOMMEND DISCIPLES FOR ANYONE! THEY'RE AN IGNORANT, UNGRATEFUL LOT! IF I WERE YOU, I WOULD DISCOURAGE ANY DISCIPLES! I GOT RID OF MINE CENTURIES AGO.
JUST RECENTLY, SEVERAL WOULD-BE FOLLOWERS CAME AROUND, BUT I SENT THEM ON THEIR WAY, DID I!
I TOLD THEM ALL TO SEEK OUT A DR. STRANGE IN THE AMERICAS! I HAD SENSED THAT HIS OLD DISCIPLE HAD LEFT HIM OF LATE! YES... DOCTOR STRANGE WAS HIS NAME!
HAVE YOU HEARD OF HIM?
BUT, AGED ONE, THIS IS DOCTOR STRANGE!
REALLY? IT IS AN HONOR MEETING YOU!
AH... THE HONOR IS MINE. YOU WOULD DO ME A GREAT SERVICE, IF YOU WOULD MORE COMPLETELY DISCOURAGE OTHER SUCH FOLLOWERS.
I NEITHER DESIRE, NOR NEED, A DISCIPLE AT THIS TIME.
2

GOOD FOR YOU! DID I TELL YOU WHAT A NUISANCE THEY CAN BE?
I WON'T TOLERATE DISCIPLES AROUND ME. I ONLY ALLOW THESE ACOLYTES. ACOLYTES? ACOLYTE! YOU THERE! I HUNGER!
:SIGH.: YES, EXALTED ONE!


AS I SURMISED, 'TWAS THE GENGHIS WHO STARTED THE PARADE OF WOULD-BE MYSTICS TO MY DOOR.*
POOR OLD SOUL! ALL THE KNOWLEDGE LOCKED IN HIS MIND, AND HE'S BARELY AWARE OF IT!
I SHALL LEAVE YOU TO YOUR DAY'S REPAST, HONORED MAGE. MAY THE VISHANTI SMILE UPON YOU!
*LAST ISSUE--AL.

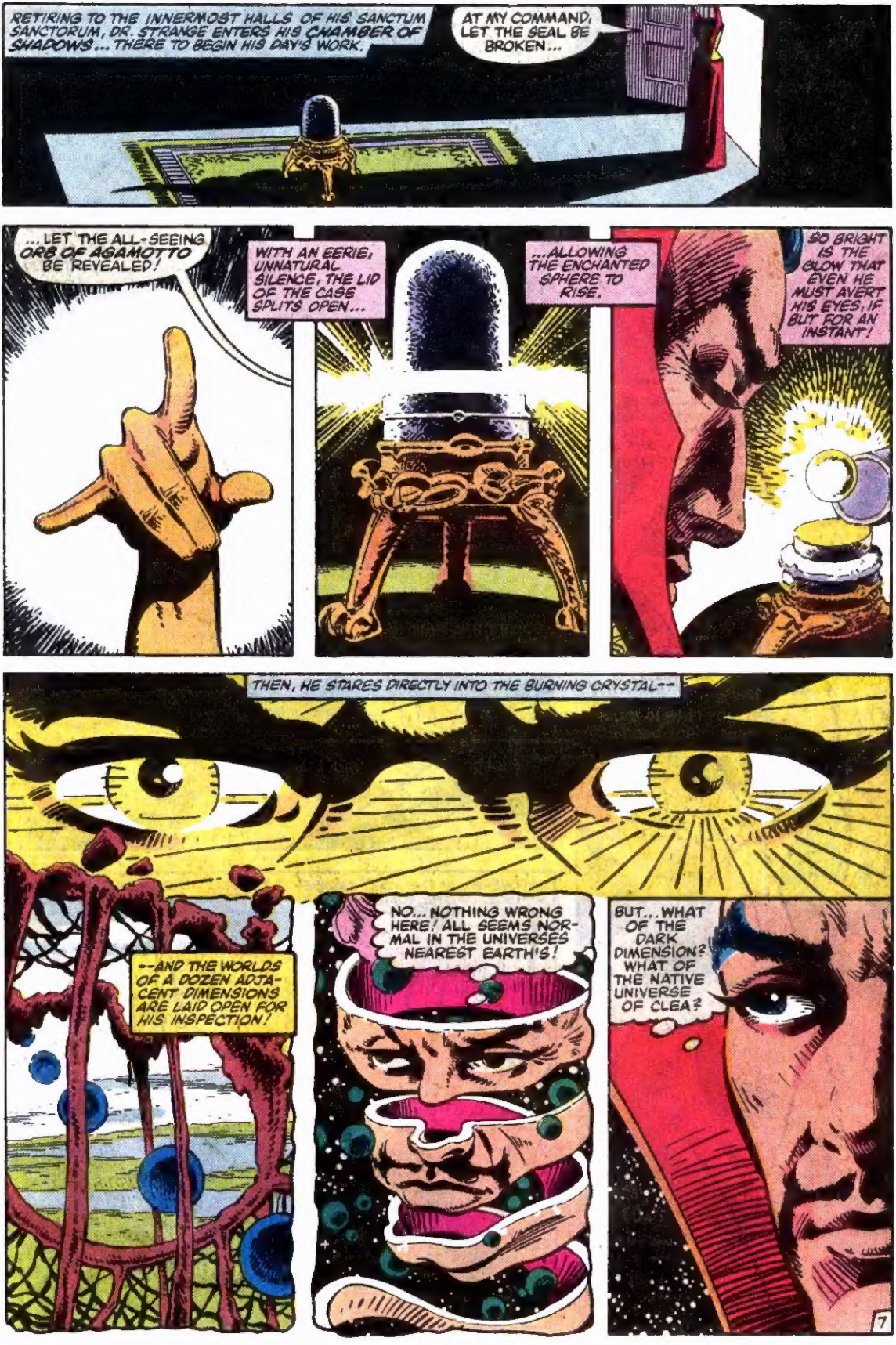

SMILE? OH, SMILE...YES! AND ON YOU!

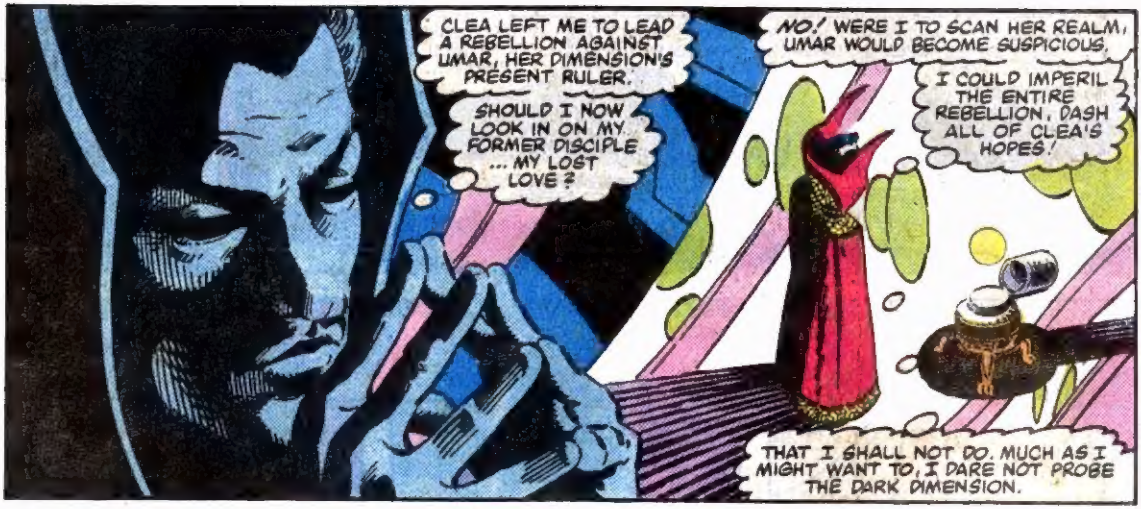

UNBOUND BY PHYSICAL LAWS, DR. STRANGE'S ASTRAL FORM PASSES DOWN THROUGH ROCKY MANTLE AND MOLTEN MAGMA, SLIPPING THROUGH THE VERY SUBSTANCE OF THE EARTH--
3

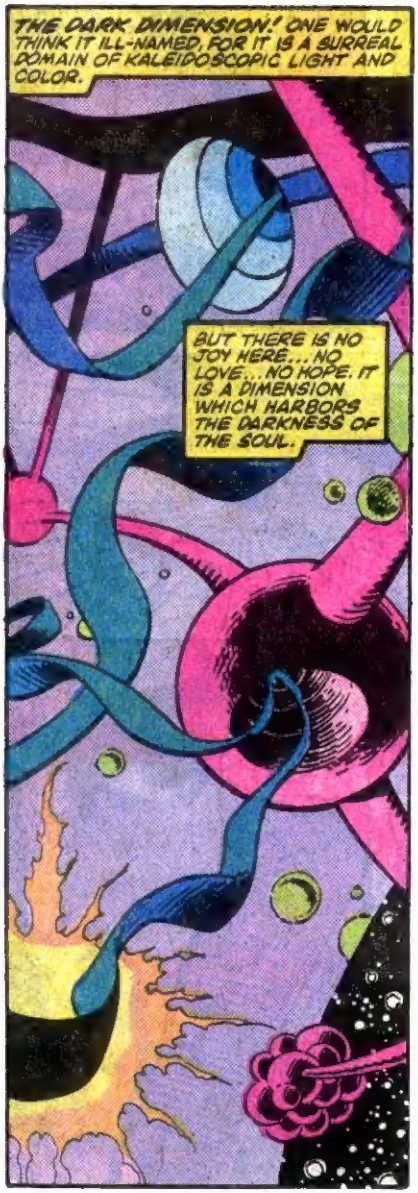
--AND EMERGING THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE.
UP HE SOARS, INTO THE HEART OF GREENWICH VILLAGE, TOWARD AN ODD, OLD DWELLING...
...THE SANCTUM WHICH HOUSES HIS PHYSICAL BODY.
DOCTOR? DOCTOR STRANGE? CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?
QUITE CLEARLY, MS. SZARDOS... NOW.
OH!
DO RISE, CHILD. THERE'S NO NEED TO HUMBLE YOURSELF.
SORRY. WITH ALL THAT'S HAPPENED, I GUESS I'VE GOTTEN SORT OF SPOOKED BY MAGIC.
MOTHER AND I OWE YOU SO MUCH! THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE BEEN A NIGHTMARE FOR OUR FAMILY. WE WERE JUST POOR GYPSIES WHEN MOTHER BECAME... WELL... POSSESSED.
THE POSSESSION WORKED ITS WAY THROUGH OUR BLOODLINE, AND THE POWER CONTROLLING MOTHER HAD BEGUN TO CONTROL ME, AS WELL!
NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE FOR YOUR FEARS, JIMAINE! THE MYSTIC ARTS WERE ALL QUITE FRIGHTENING TO ME, TOO... AT FIRST.
REALLY?
YET, THE WAY HE COMMANDS HIS CLOAK OF LEVITATION--WITH A MERE GESTURE--IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT HE WAS NOT BORN TO THE WAYS OF SORCERY!
4

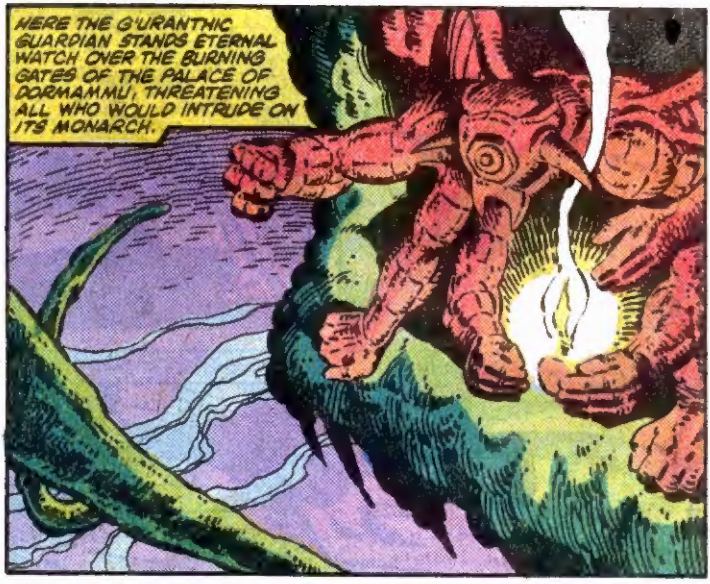
THE POWER OF MYSTICISM IS THERE FOR ANY WHO ARE WILLING TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO ITS STUDY AND TO USE IT WISELY.
YES, IT WOULD BE NICE TO EXERCISE SOME CONTROL OF MAGIC. MOTHER'S CURSE WAS THAT A MAGIC FORCE CONTROLLED HER!
"SHE WAS A MIND-SLAVE TO AN ENCHANTED WAND OF POWER. IT TRANSFORMED HER FROM A SIMPLE GYPSY WOMAN INTO MARGALI OF THE WINDING ROAD.
"HAD YOU NOT WRESTED THAT ACCURSED WAND FROM HER, SHE MIGHT NEVER HAVE RETURNED TO HER TRUE FORM"#
"AND HOW FARES YOUR MOTHER NOW?" ASKS DOCTOR STRANGE. "IS SHE WELL?"
#LAST ISSUE--AL.
"WELL OF THE FLESH... IF NOT OF THE SOUL. SHE SITS IN THE ROOM YOU GAVE US, SEEKING TO RECONCILE HER PAST TRANSGRESSIONS WITH HER FAITH."
... HOLY MOTHER FORGIVE ME. IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY GHOST... AMEN.
MAY YOUR PRAYERS BE ANSWERED, MOTHER SZARDOS.
AND BLESS YOU, DOCTOR. WERE IT NOT FOR YOU--!
I ONLY DID THAT WHICH IS MY DUTY.
NOW COME IT IS TIME WE SAW YOU ON YOUR WAY HOME.
5

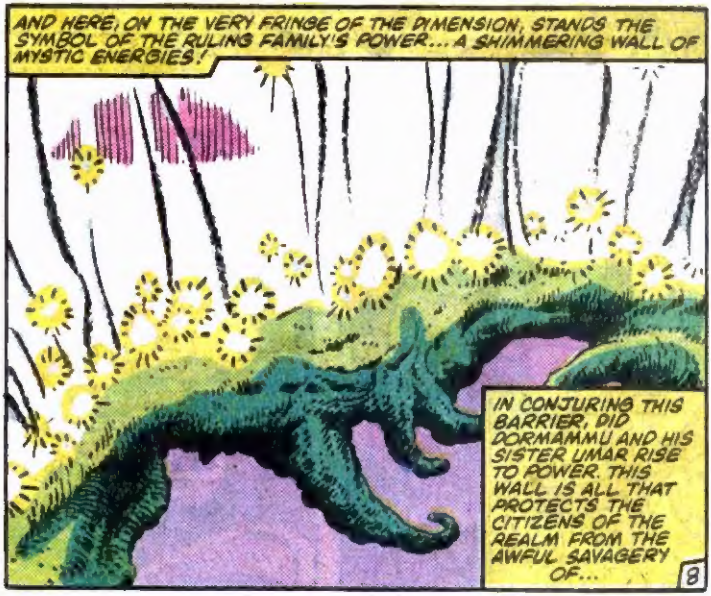
THUS, SHORTLY...
THE CAB WILL TAKE YOU WHEREVER YOU WANT TO GO. ARE YOU QUITE CERTAIN THAT YOU NEED NO MORE--?
YOU'VE DONE MORE THAN ENOUGH, DOCTOR. I HAVE AN APARTMENT UPTOWN, AND MOTHER CAN REST THERE FOR A FEW DAYS BEFORE WE HEAD BACK TO THE OLD COUNTRY.
HEY, MAKE SURE YOU DROP US A LINE FROM MUNICH, WHEN YOU FINALLY GET THERE!
I WILL, SARA! BYE ALL!
YOU OLD SOFTIE!
I BEG YOUR PARDON, SARA?
YOU WERE PREPARED TO BOOK THEM FIRST-CLASS PASSAGE TO EUROPE, AND WOULD HAVE IF JIMAINE'S STATUS AS A TWA FLIGHT ATTENDANT HADN'T ASSURED THEM PASSAGE!
FIRST CLASS FOR TWO TO EUROPE! THAT WOULD HAVE COST A BUNDLE!
YES. WHAT OF IT?
ONE SHOULD NEVER BE ENSLAVED BY MATERIAL CONCERNS, MY DEAR MS. WOLFE!
ONE SHOULDN'T FORGET TO PAY THE PHONE BILL, EITHER!
TRUE. THAT IS WHY I HIRED YOU TO HANDLE MY BUSINESS AFFAIRS. DON'T WORRY, I PROMISE NOT TO BECOME SO HELPLESS THAT I MUST BE FED BY ACOLYTES!
HUH?
6

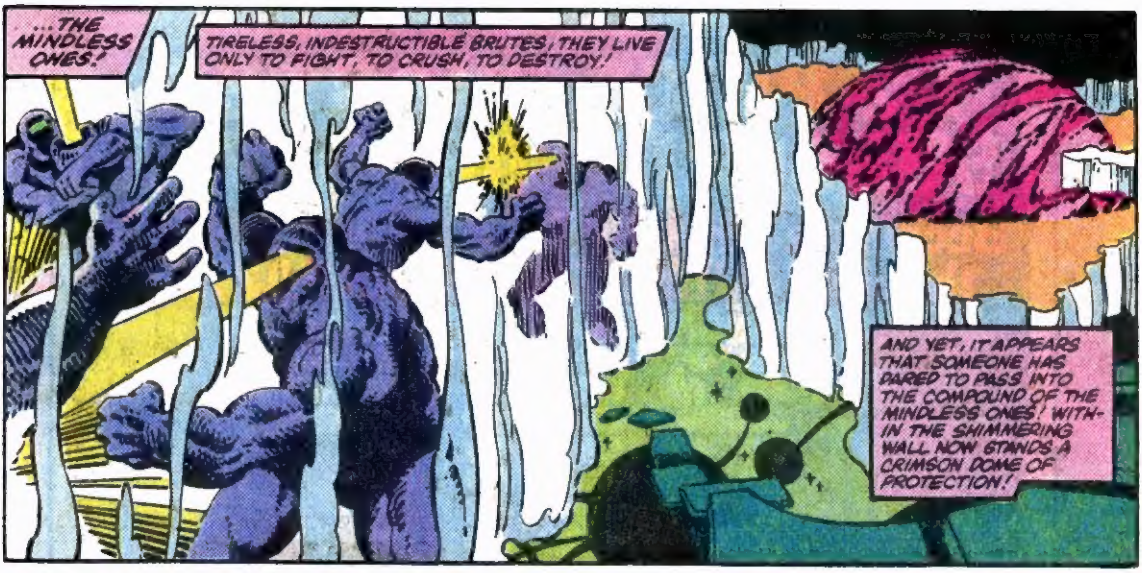

RETIRING TO THE INNERMOST HALLS OF HIS SANCTUM SANCTORUM, DR. STRANGE ENTERS HIS CHAMBER OF SHADOWS... THERE TO BEGIN HIS DAY'S WORK.
AT MY COMMAND, LET THE SEAL BE BROKEN...
...LET THE ALL-SEEING ORB OF AGAMOTTO BE REVEALED!
WITH AN EERIE, UNNATURAL SILENCE, THE LID OF THE CASE SPLITS OPEN...
...ALLOWING THE ENCHANTED SPHERE TO RISE.
SO BRIGHT IS THE GLOW THAT EVEN HE MUST AVERT HIS EYES, IF BUT FOR AN INSTANT!
THEN, HE STARES DIRECTLY INTO THE BURNING CRYSTAL--
--AND THE WORLDS OF A DOZEN ADJACENT DIMENSIONS ARE LAID OPEN FOR HIS INSPECTION!
NO... NOTHING WRONG HERE! ALL SEEMS NORMAL IN THE UNIVERSES NEAREST EARTH'S!
BUT... WHAT OF THE DARK DIMENSION? WHAT OF THE NATIVE UNIVERSE OF CLEA?
7

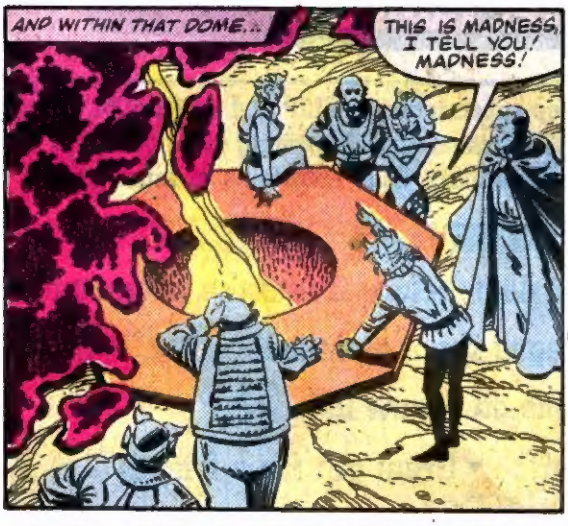

CLEA LEFT ME TO LEAD A REBELLION AGAINST UMAR, HER DIMENSION'S PRESENT RULER.
SHOULD I NOW LOOK IN ON MY FORMER DISCIPLE ... MY LOST LOVE?
NO! WERE I TO SCAN HER REALM, UMAR WOULD BECOME SUSPICIOUS,
I COULD IMPERIL THE ENTIRE REBELLION, DASH ALL OF CLEA'S HOPES!
THAT I SHALL NOT DO. MUCH AS I MIGHT WANT TO, I DARE NOT PROBE THE DARK DIMENSION.

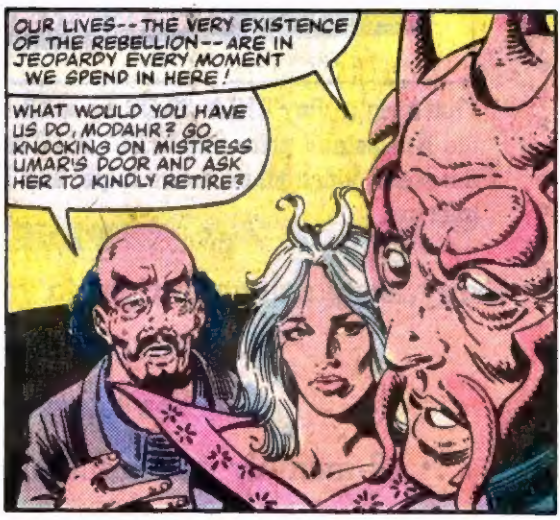

THE DARK DIMENSION! ONE WOULD THINK IT ILL-NAMED, FOR IT IS A SURREAL DOMAIN OF KALEIDOSCOPIC LIGHT AND COLOR.
BUT THERE IS NO JOY HERE... NO LOVE... NO HOPE. IT IS A DIMENSION WHICH HARBORS THE DARKNESS OF THE SOUL.


HERE THE G'URANTHIC GUARDIAN STANDS ETERNAL WATCH OVER THE BURNING GATES OF THE PALACE OF DORMAMMU, THREATENING ALL WHO WOULD INTRUDE ON ITS MONARCH.


AND HERE, ON THE VERY FRINGE OF THE DIMENSION, STANDS THE SYMBOL OF THE RULING FAMILY'S POWER... A SHIMMERING WALL OF MYSTIC ENERGIES!
IN CONJURING THIS BARRIER, DID DORMAMMU AND HIS SISTER UMAR RISE TO POWER. THIS WALL IS ALL THAT PROTECTS THE CITIZENS OF THE REALM FROM THE AWFUL SAVAGERY OF...

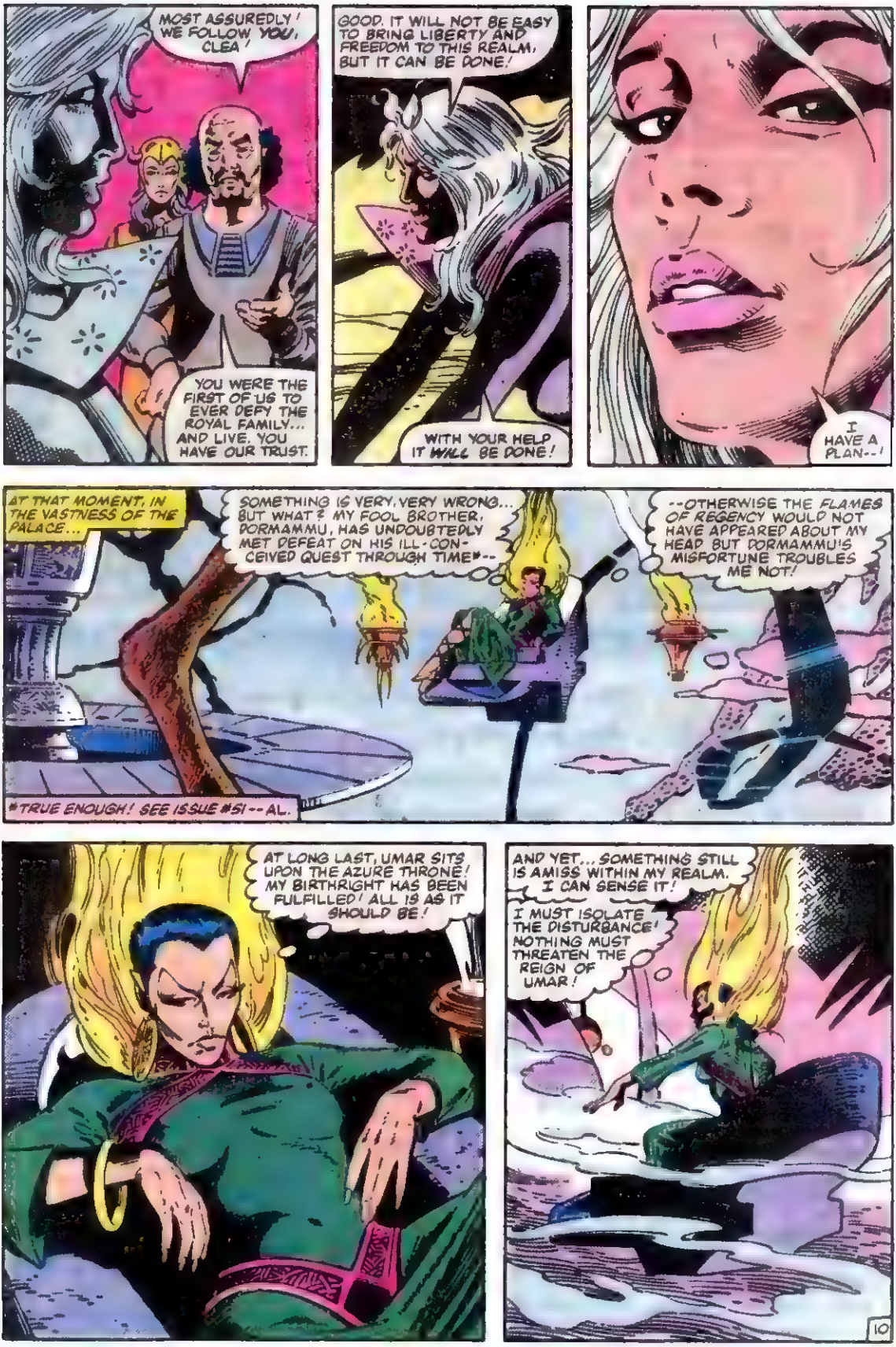

...THE MINDLESS ONES!
TIRELESS, INDESTRUCTIBLE BRUTES, THEY LIVE ONLY TO FIGHT, TO CRUSH, TO DESTROY!
AND YET, IT APPEARS THAT SOMEONE HAS DARED TO PASS INTO THE COMPOUND OF THE MINDLESS ONES! WITHIN THE SHIMMERING WALL NOW STANDS A CRIMSON DOME OF PROTECTION!


AND WITHIN THAT DOME...
THIS IS MADNESS, I TELL YOU! MADNESS!

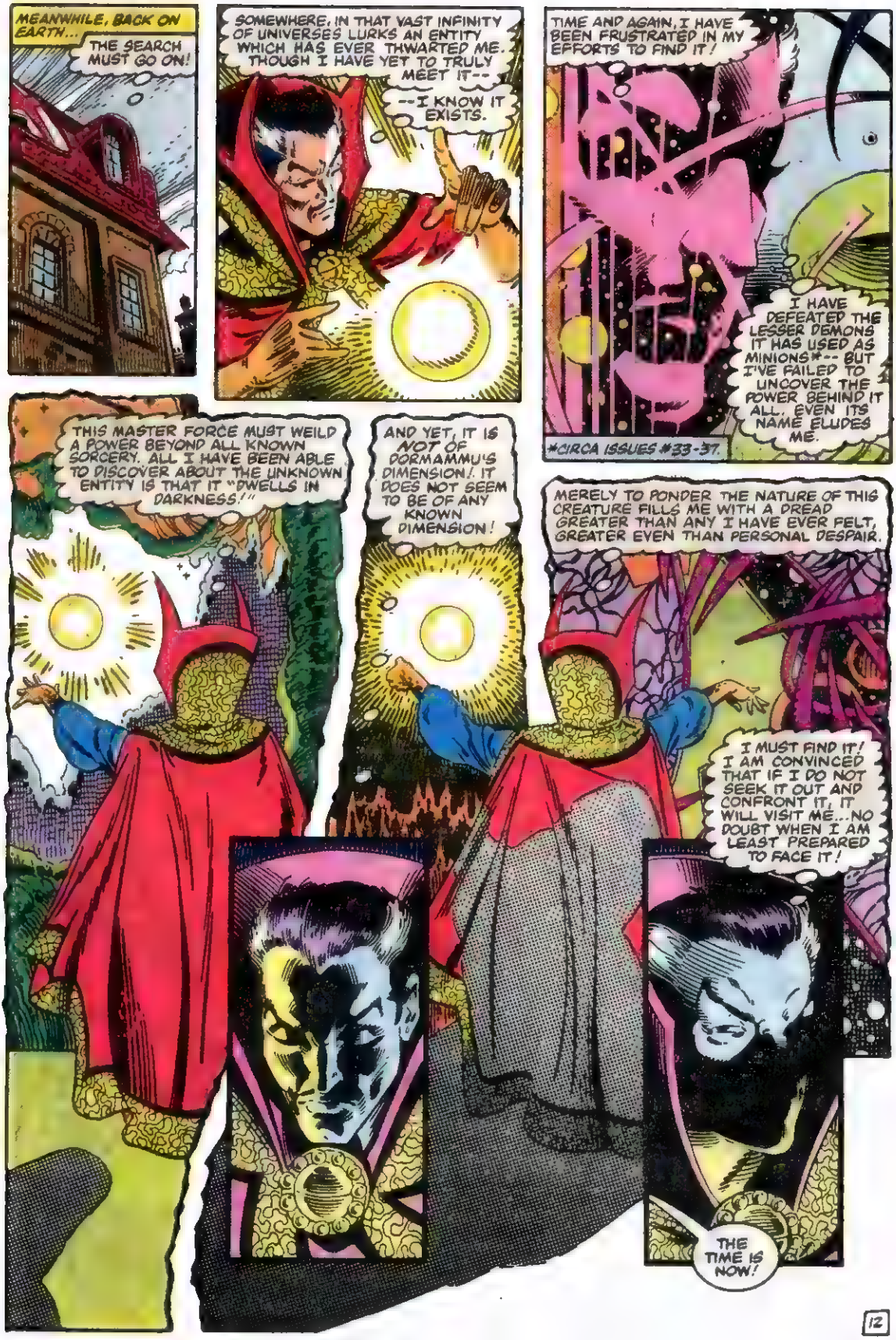

OUR LIVES--THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE REBELLION--ARE IN JEOPARDY EVERY MOMENT WE SPEND IN HERE!
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE US DO, MODAHR? GO KNOCKING ON MISTRESS UMAR'S DOOR AND ASK HER TO KINDLY RETIRE?

WILL YOU TWO BE STILL?
YOU ASKED ME TO LEAVE EARTH, TO RETURN HERE AND LEAD YOUR BLESSED REBELLION--

--AND THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT I INTEND! BUT I WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY MORE OF THIS BICKERING!
YOU FOLLOW ME...OR YOU FOLLOW UMAR! UNDERSTOOD?

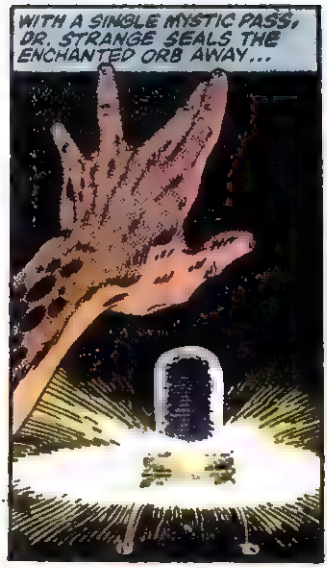

MOST ASSUREDLY! WE FOLLOW YOU, CLEA!
YOU WERE THE FIRST OF US TO EVER DEFY THE ROYAL FAMILY... AND LIVE. YOU HAVE OUR TRUST.
GOOD. IT WILL NOT BE EASY TO BRING LIBERTY AND FREEDOM TO THIS REALM, BUT IT CAN BE DONE!
WITH YOUR HELP IT WILL BE DONE!
I HAVE A PLAN--!
AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE VASTNESS OF THE PALACE...
SOMETHING IS VERY, VERY WRONG... BUT WHAT? MY FOOL BROTHER, DORMAMMU, HAS UNDOUBTEDLY MET DEFEAT ON HIS ILL-CONCEIVED QUEST THROUGH TIME*--
--OTHERWISE THE FLAMES OF REGENCY WOULD NOT HAVE APPEARED ABOUT MY HEAD BUT DORMAMMU'S MISFORTUNE TROUBLES ME NOT!
*TRUE ENOUGH! SEE ISSUE #51 -- AL.
AT LONG LAST, UMAR SITS UPON THE AZURE THRONE! MY BIRTHRIGHT HAS BEEN FULFILLED! ALL IS AS IT SHOULD BE!
AND YET... SOMETHING STILL IS AMISS WITHIN MY REALM. I CAN SENSE IT!
I MUST ISOLATE THE DISTURBANCE! NOTHING MUST THREATEN THE REIGN OF UMAR!
10

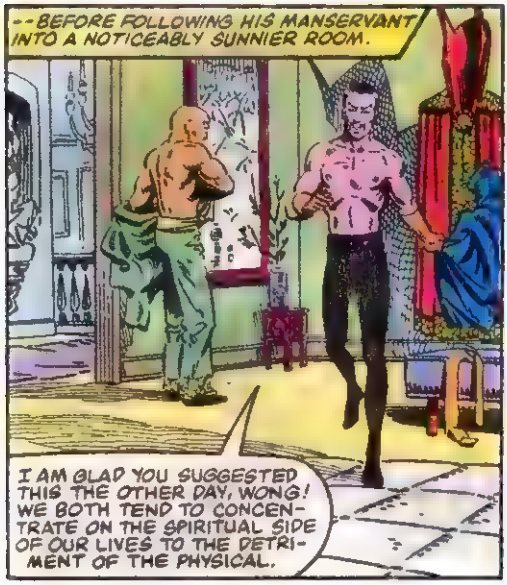
FLAMES OF FALTINE, JOIN... COHERE!
GAIN YE VOICE, AND BE MY SEER!
WE HEAR AND OBEY!
I HAVE FELT A PSYCHIC PERTURBATION. BE IT A DANGER TO MY RULE?
A DANGER THERE IS, AND A DANGER THERE SHALL BE!
NAME ITS CAUSE!
YOUR OWN BLOOD... YOUR OWN FLESH WILL RISE UP AGAINST YOU!
ENOUGH! I ASK FOR COUNSEL AND I RECEIVE RIDDLES! BEGONE!
SATANNISH TAKE THESE ENIGMAS! WHAT COULD IT HAVE MEANT... THAT MY OWN BLOOD AND FLESH WOULD BETRAY ME?
I HAVE LONG BEEN BEYOND THE PAINS OF THE FLESH, AND THERE IS NO ONE WHO... NO! IT CANNOT BE!
BUT THERE IS NO OTHER ANSWER! MY OWN FLESH AND BLOOD...
...CLEA!

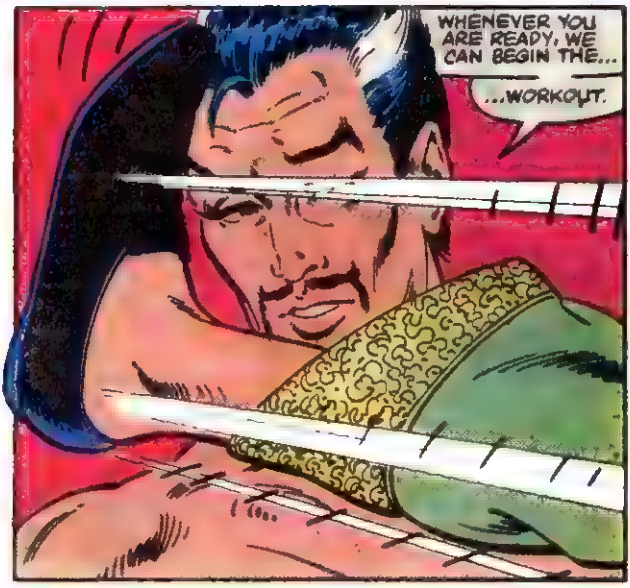

MEANWHILE, BACK ON EARTH...
THE SEARCH MUST GO ON!
SOMEWHERE, IN THAT VAST INFINITY OF UNIVERSES LURKS AN ENTITY WHICH HAS EVER THWARTED ME. THOUGH I HAVE YET TO TRULY MEET IT--
--I KNOW IT EXISTS.
TIME AND AGAIN, I HAVE BEEN FRUSTRATED IN MY EFFORTS TO FIND IT!
I HAVE DEFEATED THE LESSER DEMONS IT HAS USED AS MINIONS*-- BUT I'VE FAILED TO UNCOVER THE POWER BEHIND IT ALL. EVEN ITS NAME ELUDES ME.
*CIRCA ISSUES #33-37.
THIS MASTER FORCE MUST WEILD A POWER BEYOND ALL KNOWN SORCERY. ALL I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DISCOVER ABOUT THE UNKNOWN ENTITY IS THAT IT "DWELLS IN DARKNESS!"
AND YET, IT IS NOT OF DORMAMMU'S DIMENSION!. IT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE OF ANY KNOWN DIMENSION!
MERELY TO PONDER THE NATURE OF THIS CREATURE FILLS ME WITH A DREAD GREATER THAN ANY I HAVE EVER FELT, GREATER EVEN THAN PERSONAL DESPAIR.
I MUST FIND IT! I AM CONVINCED THAT IF I DO NOT SEEK IT OUT AND CONFRONT IT, IT WILL VISIT ME...NO DOUBT WHEN I AM LEAST PREPARED TO FACE IT!
THE TIME IS NOW!

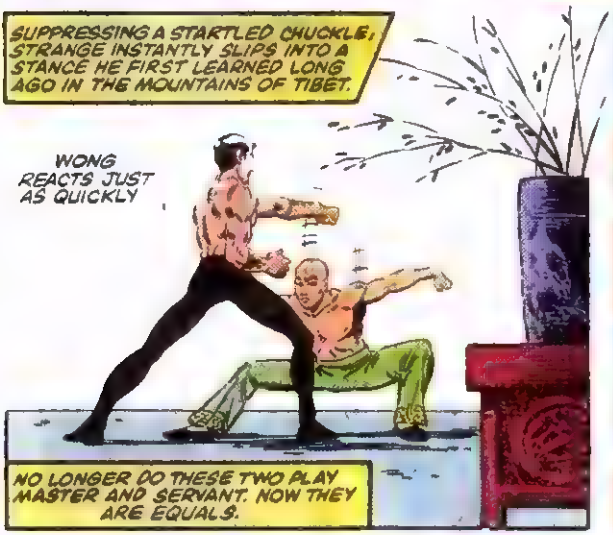
FORGIVE ME, MASTER!
I WOULD NEVER HAVE INTERRUPTED YOUR CONTEMPLATIONS. BUT YOU WISHED ME TO REMIND YOU ON THE HOUR OF OUR SESSION.

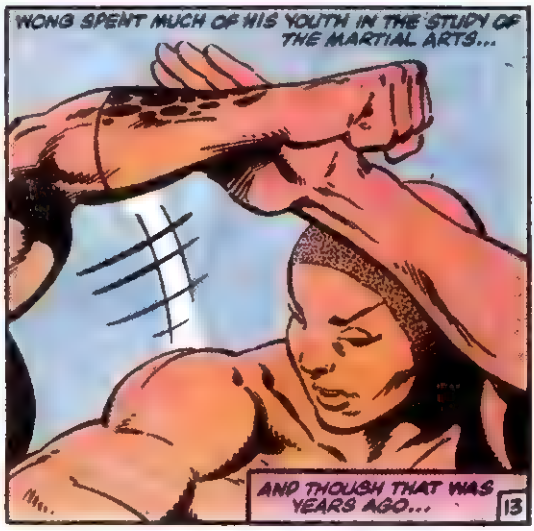
I DID INDEED, WONG. YOUR INTERRUPTION WAS WELL-TIMED... I WAS GETTING NOWHERE WITH AN UNPLEASANT DUTY! I WELCOME A DIVERSION!
VERY GOOD, MASTER! I GO TO PREPARE THE ROOM!


WITH A SINGLE MYSTIC PASS, DR. STRANGE SEALS THE ENCHANTED ORB AWAY...

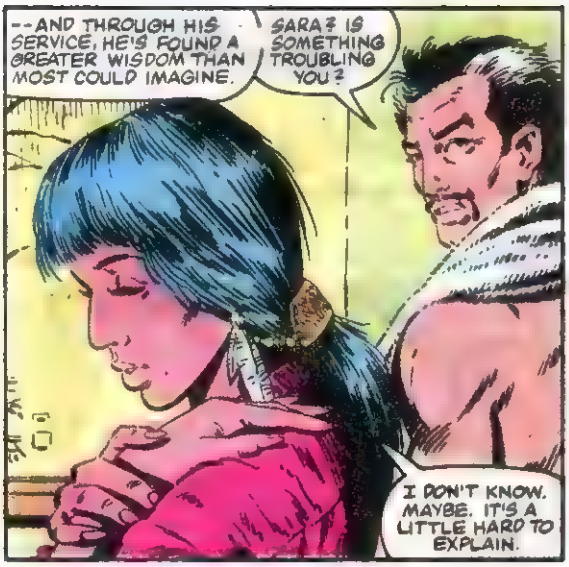

--BEFORE FOLLOWING HIS MANSERVANT INTO A NOTICEABLY SUNNIER ROOM.
I AM GLAD YOU SUGGESTED THIS THE OTHER DAY, WONG! WE BOTH TEND TO CONCENTRATE ON THE SPIRITUAL SIDE OF OUR LIVES TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE PHYSICAL.

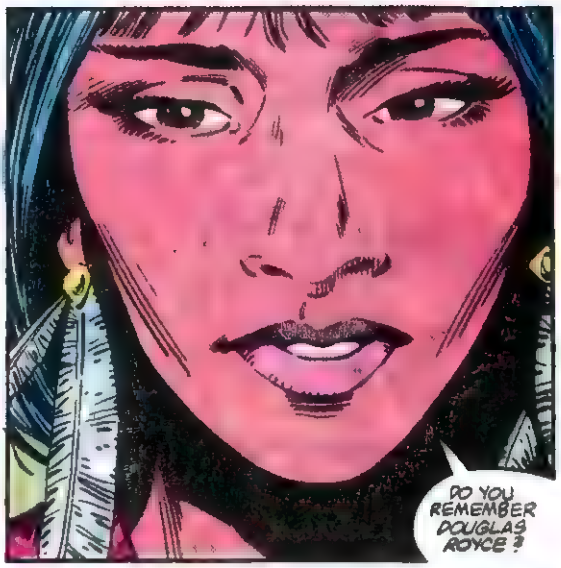

WHENEVER YOU ARE READY, WE CAN BEGIN THE...
...WORKOUT.

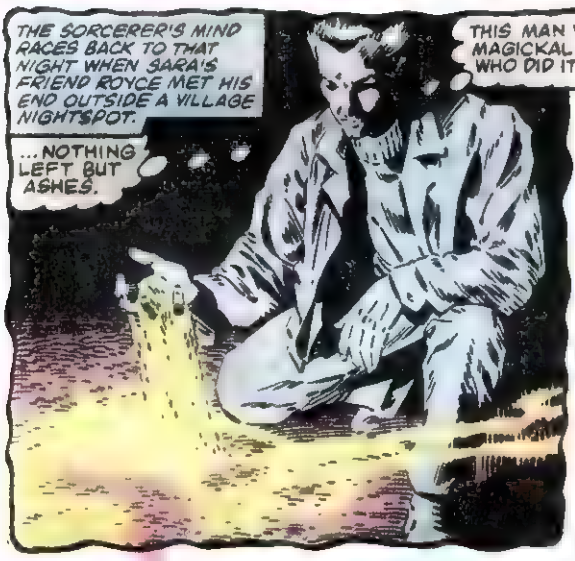

SUPPRESSING A STARTLED CHUCKLE, STRANGE INSTANTLY SLIPS INTO A STANCE HE FIRST LEARNED LONG AGO IN THE MOUNTAINS OF TIBET.
WONG REACTS JUST AS QUICKLY
NO LONGER DO THESE TWO PLAY MASTER AND SERVANT. NOW THEY ARE EQUALS.

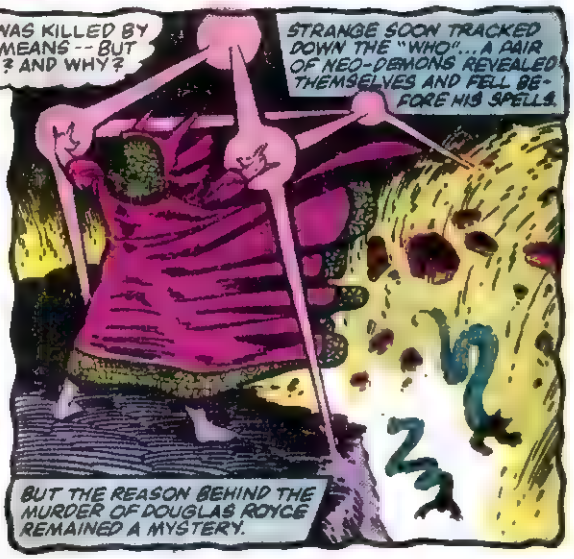

WONG SPENT MUCH OF HIS YOUTH IN THE STUDY OF THE MARTIAL ARTS...
AND THOUGH THAT WAS YEARS AGO...

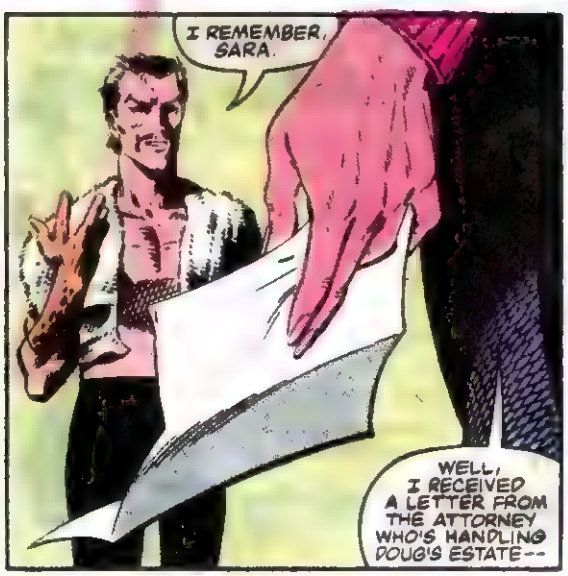
...THE PASSAGE OF TIME HAS DONE LITTLE TO DIMINISH HIS SPEED--
--OR AGILITY.
WOW.
FINALLY, AFTER NEARLY AN HOUR ..
HOLD, WONG! WE DON'T WANT TO OVERDO IT
VERY IMPRESSIVE! I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT SINCE FISTS OF FURY PLAYED AT THE WAVERLY THEATER!
AND YOU, WONG--!
YOU'RE A REGULAR JACKIE CHAN! I NEVER SUSPECTED THAT YOU KNEW MOVES LIKE THAT!
HE WHO KNOWS, DOES NOT SPEAK, SARA. HE WHO SPEAKS, DOES NOT KNOW. YOU MUST EXCUSE ME NOW.
HE'S A GOOD MAN, SARA. HE HAS SERVED ME SO FAITHFULLY OVER THE YEARS--
14

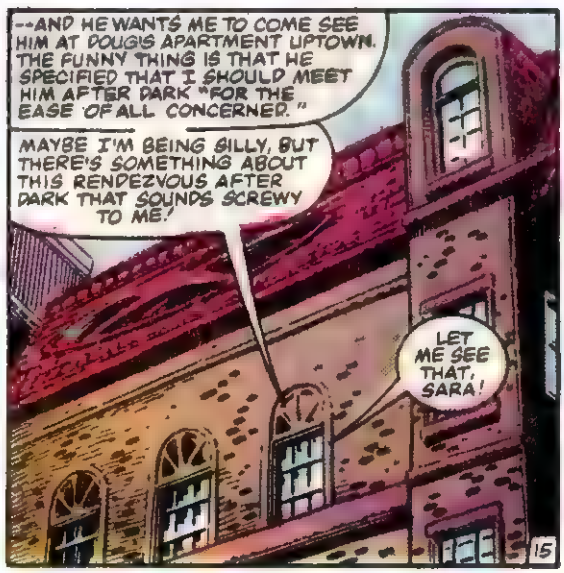

--AND THROUGH HIS SERVICE, HE'S FOUND A GREATER WISDOM THAN MOST COULD IMAGINE.
SARA? IS SOMETHING TROUBLING YOU?
I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE. IT'S A LITTLE HARD TO EXPLAIN.


DO YOU REMEMBER DOUGLAS ROYCE?

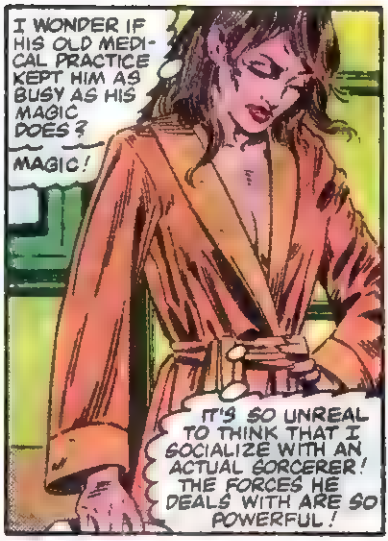

THE SORCERER'S MIND RACES BACK TO THAT NIGHT WHEN SARA'S FRIEND ROYCE MET HIS END OUTSIDE A VILLAGE NIGHTSPOT.
...NOTHING LEFT BUT ASHES.
THIS MAN WAS KILLED BY MAGICKAL MEANS -- BUT WHO DID IT? AND WHY?


STRANGE SOON TRACKED DOWN THE "WHO"... A PAIR OF NEO-DEMONS REVEALED THEMSELVES AND FELL BEFORE HIS SPELLS.
BUT THE REASON BEHIND THE MURDER OF DOUGLAS ROYCE REMAINED A MYSTERY.

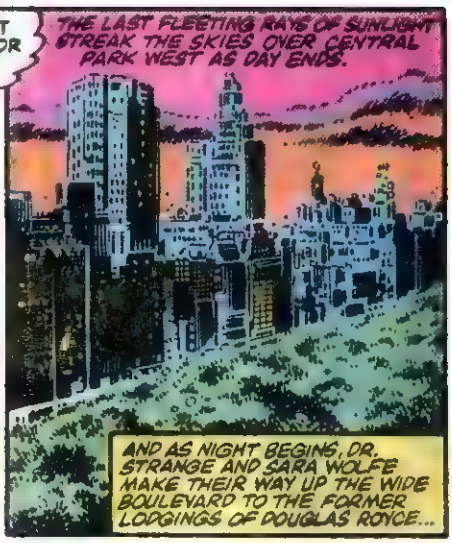

I REMEMBER, SARA.
WELL, I RECEIVED A LETTER FROM THE ATTORNEY WHO'S HANDLING DOUG'S ESTATE--

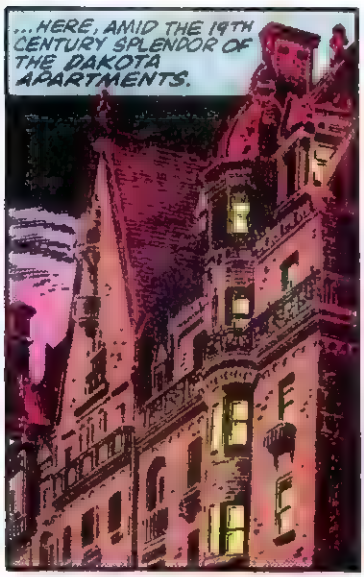

--AND HE WANTS ME TO COME SEE HIM AT DOUG'S APARTMENT UPTOWN. THE FUNNY THING IS THAT HE SPECIFIED THAT I SHOULD MEET HIM AFTER DARK "FOR THE EASE OF ALL CONCERNED."
MAYBE I'M BEING SILLY, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THIS RENDEZVOUS AFTER DARK THAT SOUNDS SCREWY TO ME.
LET ME SEE THAT, SARA!

HMM... EVERYTHING APPEARS TO BE LEGITIMATE, BUT I'M PICKING UP SOME ODD VIBRATIONS FROM THIS AS WELL. I THINK I SHOULD ACCOMPANY YOU, IF THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
YOU'D BE MORE THAN WELCOME, BUT DON'T YOU HAVE A DINNER DATE TONIGHT?
YES, BUT I CAN POSTPONE IT. BEST DO THAT NOW, I SUPPOSE
MOMENTS LATER, IN A FASHIONABLE SOHO APARTMENT...
IT NEVER FAILS! EVERYTIME I SIT DOWN FOR A SOAK IN THE TUB--!
RING
R-RING
RING
BLESSING RESIDENCE
GOOD AFTERNOON, MORGANA. I HOPE I DIDN'T PULL YOU AWAY FROM ANYTHING.
STEPHEN! HEL-LO! NO, NOT AT ALL! I DIDN'T EXPECT TO HEAR FROM YOU UNTIL THIS EVENING!
YES, WELL I'M AFRAID SOMETHING HAS COME UP THAT MAY REQUIRE MY PROFESSIONAL ATTENTION. I WON'T BE ABLE TO MEET YOU AT SEVEN AFTER ALL.
OH, THAT'S A SHAME! I FOUND A NEW SUSHI PLACE I KNOW YOU'D LOVE! MAYBE WE COULD MEET LATER?
HOPEFULLY, MORGANA.. BUT I CAN'T MAKE ANY PROMISES!
I UNDERSTAND, STEPHEN PLEASE, BE CAREFUL. CIAO!
16


I WONDER IF HIS OLD MEDICAL PRACTICE KEPT HIM AS BUSY AS HIS MAGIC DOES?
MAGIC!
IT'S SO UNREAL TO THINK THAT I SOCIALIZE WITH AN ACTUAL SORCERER! THE FORCES HE DEALS WITH ARE SO POWERFUL!

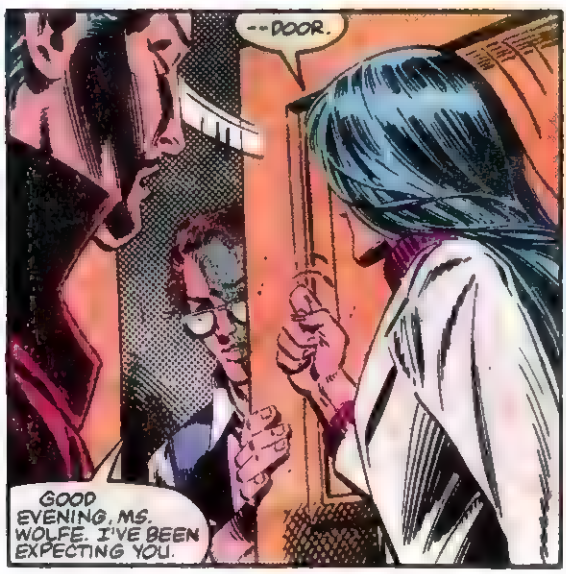
WHATEVER IT IS OUT THERE, WAITING FOR HIM... I HOPE HE CAN HANDLE IT!

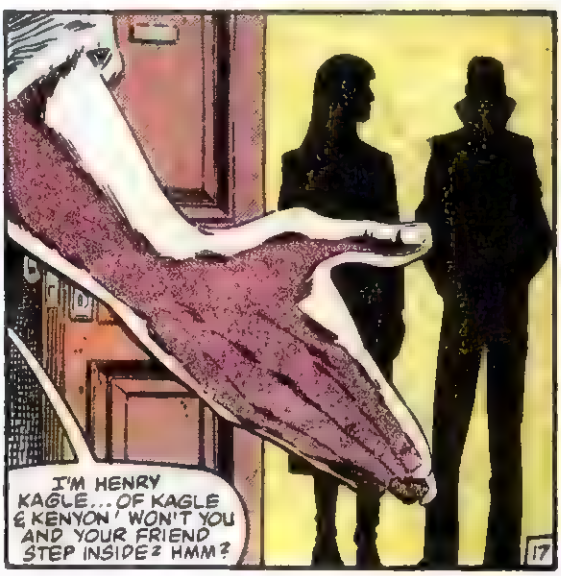

THE LAST FLEETING RAYS OF SUNLIGHT STREAK THE SKIES OVER CENTRAL PARK WEST AS DAY ENDS.
AND AS NIGHT BEGINS, DR. STRANGE AND SARA WOLFE MAKE THEIR WAY UP THE WIDE BOULEVARD TO THE FORMER LODGINGS OF DOUGLAS ROYCE...


...HERE, AMID THE 19TH CENTURY SPLENDOR OF THE DAKOTA APARTMENTS.

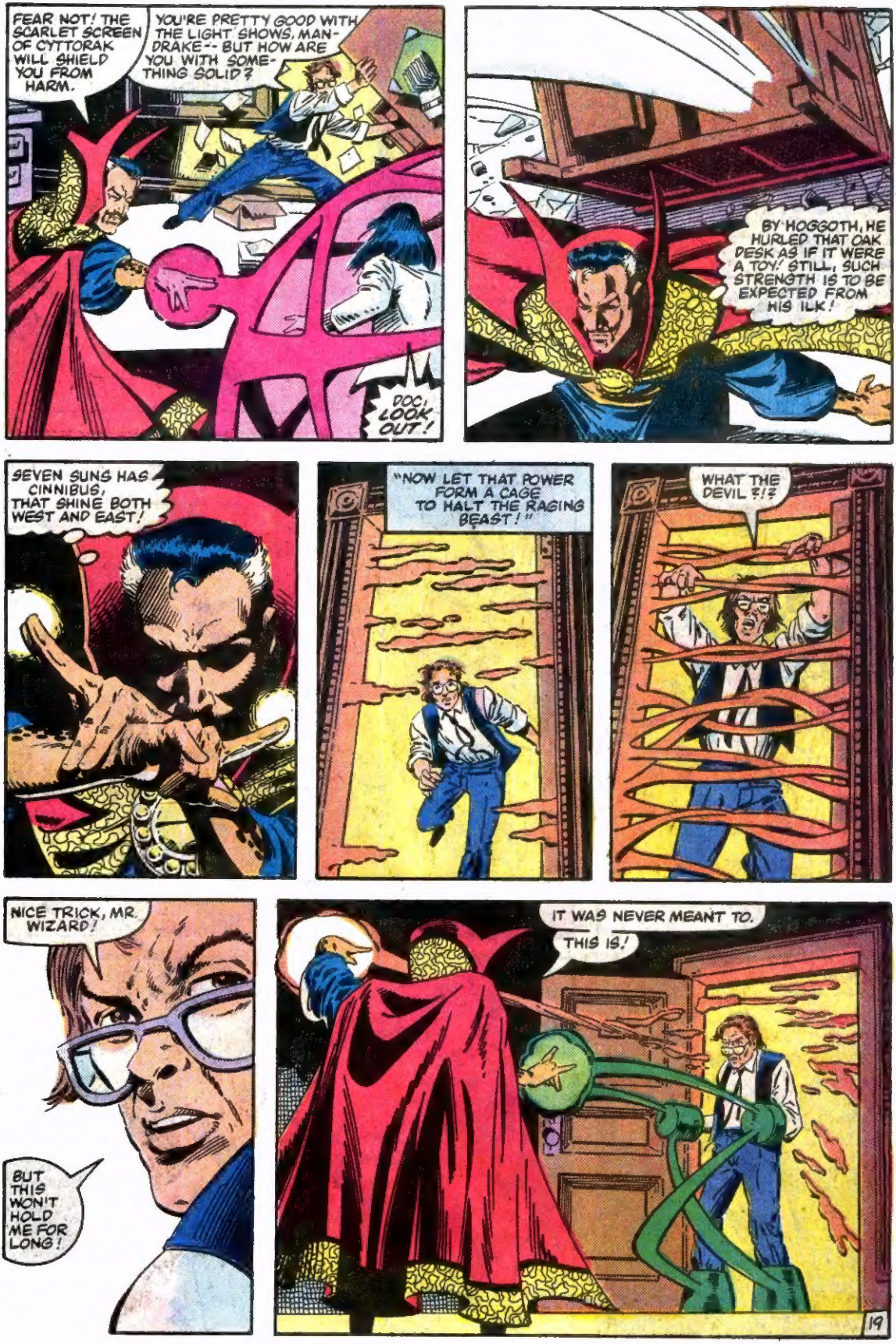
IS SOMETHING ELSE THE MATTER NOW, SARA? YOU SEEM UNUSUALLY TENSE.
I DUNNO, DOC-- I GUESS IT'S THIS BUILDING.
I MEAN, YOUR PLACE IS WEIRD, BUT I'VE GOTTEN USED TO IT. THE DAKOTA ALWAYS STRUCK ME AS SORT OF CREEPY.

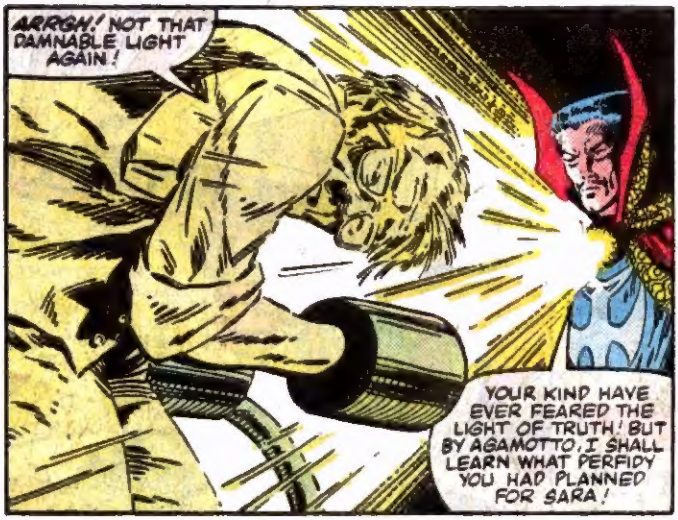
THEY DID FILM ROSEMARY'S BABY HERE, AFTER ALL! THE FEW TIMES I VISITED DOUG HERE, I ALWAYS HALF EXPECTED VINCENT PRICE TO BE LURKING BEHIND EVERY--


--DOOR.
GOOD EVENING, MS. WOLFE. I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.


I'M HENRY KAGLE... OF KAGLE & KENYON! WON'T YOU AND YOUR FRIEND STEP INSIDE? HMM?
17

I DO HOPE YOU'LL EXCUSE THE MESS! I'VE BEEN TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF MR. ROYCE'S PAPERS FOR JUST DAYS NOW!
LET ME CLEAN YOU A LITTLE PLACE TO SIT!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MR. KAGLE! REALLY!
OH, NO-NO-NO! I INSIST! HERE WE GO!
JUST A MINUTE, SARA! YOU'LL NOT WANT TO ACCEPT THIS CREATURE'S HOSPITALITY!
WHAT?
DEAR ME, HAVE I DONE SOMETHING TO OFFEND?
WITH A MERE THOUGHT, STRANGE DISPERSES THE ILLUSION WHICH MASKED HIS GARB...
YOU CANNOT DECEIVE A SORCERER, MONSTER!
NOR CAN YOU HIDE YOUR TRUE NATURE FROM THE ALL-SEEING LIGHT OF MY ENCHANTED AMULET!
H-HEY!
BEHOLD, SARA! THIS MAN HAS NO SHADOW!


FEAR NOT! THE SCARLET SCREEN OF CYTTORAK WILL SHIELD YOU FROM HARM.
YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD WITH THE LIGHT SHOWS, MANDRAKE-- BUT HOW ARE YOU WITH SOMETHING SOLID?
DOC, LOOK OUT!
BY HOGGOTH, HE HURLED THAT OAK DESK AS IF IT WERE A TOY! STILL, SUCH STRENGTH IS TO BE EXPECTED FROM HIS ILK!
SEVEN SUNS HAS CINNIBUS, THAT SHINE BOTH WEST AND EAST!
"NOW LET THAT POWER FORM A CAGE TO HALT THE RAGING BEAST!"
WHAT THE DEVIL?!?
NICE TRICK, MR. WIZARD!
BUT THIS WON'T HOLD ME FOR LONG!
IT WAS NEVER MEANT TO.
THIS IS!
19

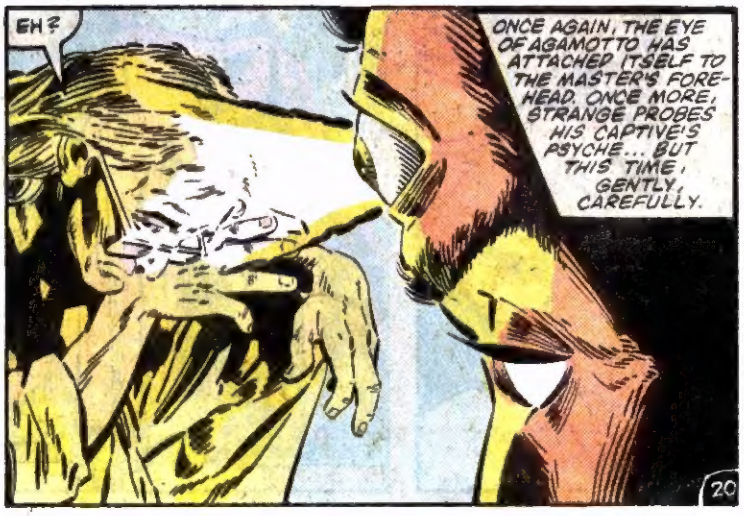

ARRGH! NOT THAT DAMNABLE LIGHT AGAIN!
YOUR KIND HAVE EVER FEARED THE LIGHT OF TRUTH! BUT BY AGAMOTTO, I SHALL LEARN WHAT PERFIDY YOU HAD PLANNED FOR SARA!

N-NO, YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG! P-PLEASE! I CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE OF THAT LIGHT! IT BURNS!!

BY HOGGOTH, I HAD NEARLY FORGOTTEN HOW SWIFTLY THESE CREATURES COULD TURN INTO AN ETHEREAL MIST!
YET, I SENSED A HESITATION, A RELUCTANCE ON HIS PART IN ASSUMING THAT STATE! AND EVEN NOW HE REFORMS!

OH, LORD, I SWORE I'D NEVER DO THAT--SWORE I'D NEVER GIVE IN TO THE CURSE THAT MUCH!
D-DIDN'T WANT TO... BUT THAT LIGHT WAS SO BRIGHT, EVEN WORSE THAN THE SUN--!

THERE IS REVULSION IN HIS VOICE, AND HE SHAKES LIKE AN ADDICT GOING THROUGH WITHDRAWAL. SOMETHING ABOUT THIS ONE IS VERY DIFFERENT--!


EH?
ONCE AGAIN, THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO HAS ATTACHED ITSELF TO THE MASTER'S FOREHEAD. ONCE MORE, STRANGE PROBES HIS CAPTIVE'S PSYCHE... BUT THIS TIME, GENTLY, CAREFULLY.

AND THEN...
YOU'LL NOT BE NEEDING ANY FURTHER MYSTIC PROTECTION, SARA.
HERE, SIR... ALLOW ME TO HELP YOU!
UH, DOC... I'M SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, BUT--
--JUST WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! ONE MINUTE YOU'RE GOING AT IT TOOTH AND NAIL WITH THIS GUY, AND THE NEXT YOU ACT LIKE HE'S A LONG-LOST BUDDY!
THERE HAS BEEN AN UNFORTUNATE MISUNDERSTANDING, SARA. WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THIS MAN.
THANKS FOR THE TESTIMONIAL, PAL, BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN A REAL MAN IN SOME TIME... NOT A LIVING ONE LEASTWAYS.
"NOT LIVING?" I SUPPOSE YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT A GHOST OR SOMETHING HAS SUMMONED ME TO THE APARTMENT OF A DEAD FRIEND?
CAN THE ICY TONES, SISTER. THEY DON'T SUIT YOU.
I'M NO SPOOK. MY REAL NAME IS HANNIBAL KING. I'M A PRIVATE DETECTIVE.
AND I'M ALSO WHAT YOU CALL YOUR VAMPIRE!
21

VAMPIRE?!
I DIDN'T GET THESE TEETH IN A NOVELTY STORE, BEAUTIFUL!
OH, DON'T WORRY! I'VE NEVER SUNK MY FANGS INTO ANY SINGLE LIVING THING!
SAY, YOU DON'T LOOK TOO WELL! MAYBE YOU SHOULD BE THE ONE SITTING DOWN.

YES, M-MAYBE I SHOULD.
SORRY I PULLED THE OLD LAWYER ACT ON YOU, BUT I WASN'T SURE JUST WHERE YOU FIGURED IN DOUG ROYCE'S LIFE STORY.
DOUGIE WAS A FRIEND OF MINE, AND IT'S LOOKING MORE AND MORE LIKE A CASE I'M WORKING ON JUST MIGHT BE TIED IN WITH HIS MURDER!
YOU CAN COUNT ON US TO RENDER ASSISTANCE, MR. KING.

WE HAVEN'T BEEN FORMALLY INTRODUCED... I AM DR. STEPHEN STRANGE. PUBLICLY, I AM THOUGHT TO BE AN EXPERT IN OCCULT LORE.
AS YOU HAVE SEEN I AM SOMEWHAT MORE.

YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A REAL TALENT FOR UNDERSTATEMENT, DOC. YEAH, I'VE HEARD OF YOU...
...AND I COULD USE A LITTLE MAGICAL MUSCLE ON THIS CASE. IT'S A CRAZY MESS INVOLVING CULTS AND DEMONS... AND WORSE.

I HAVE TO WARN YOU, THOUGH, THAT WE'LL BE PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES. UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, THIS ALL TIES IN WITH THE RESURRECTION OF THE NASTIEST CREEP WHO EVER WALKED, BIT OR FLEW!
MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD OF HIM ...A GENT NAME OF DRACULA!
22

NEXT ISSUE THE PLOT THICKENS AS WE MEET...

"THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT!"